



# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

## DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS

TO: All Development Services Department Customers

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION BULLETIN 127**  
Determining Occupant Load with 2006 IBC

DATE: October 9, 2006

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The 2006 edition of the International Building Code (IBC) is currently adopted by the City of San Antonio. Section 1004 of the 2006 IBC lists requirements for determination of the occupant load of a building or portion thereof. The occupant load is used to determine design requirements such as occupancy classification, means of egress, required fire protection systems, etc.

Per Section 1004.1.1, the minimum occupant load for areas without fixed seating is determined by dividing the floor area under consideration by the applicable 'occupant per unit of area factor' listed in Table 1004.1.1. However, Section 1004.1.1 includes the following exception:

*Where approved by the building official, the actual number of occupants for whom each occupied space, floor or building is designed, although less than those determined by calculation, shall be permitted to be used in the determination of the design occupant load.*

The intent of this exception is to allow the building official to review and evaluate unusual design conditions on a case-by-case basis. Where a customer wishes to utilize this exception in their design, the customer is required to submit a written proposal, in letter format, to the Development Services Department – attn: Development Services Engineer - for review. The proposal is required to 1) describe the intended use, 2) clearly indicate the proposed occupant load, and 3) include an explanation regarding why the calculation method prescribed in Section 1004.1.1 is not appropriate or applicable to the particular design. If the request is prepared by the registered design professional, it is required to be countersigned by the owner.

COSA DSD shall review the proposal and determine whether it is approved or denied and shall respond to the proposal in writing. The estimated turnaround time for review and action is ten (10) business days.

Should the customer be dissatisfied with the ruling taken on the request, the customer may appeal the ruling to the appropriate Board of Appeals in accordance with the 2006 IBC as adopted by the City.

If you have any questions regarding this Information Bulletin, please contact a Development Services Engineer at 210-207-8394.